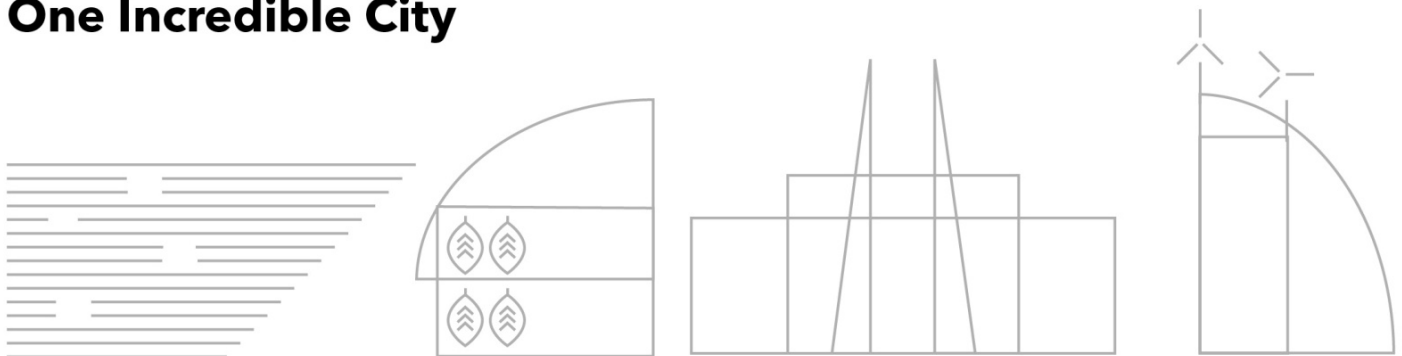


# Complaints Procedure

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## Document Information:

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**Author:** HoS Quality Audit and Standards

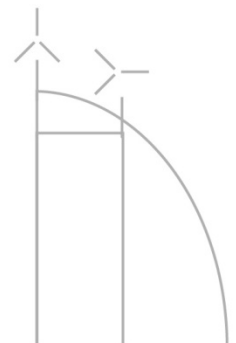
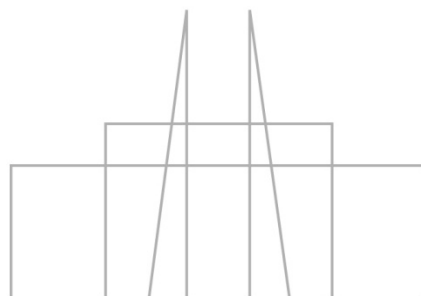
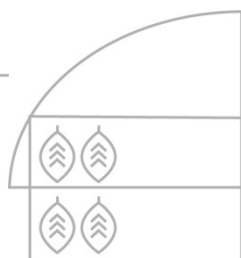
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## Complaints Procedure

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## Complaints Procedure

### Notes for Complainants

#### Introduction

The Sheffield College is committed to providing a high quality, educational experience and aims to provide a supportive environment, responsive to any concerns raised by students. Students should feel able to make a complaint relating to the action, or lack of action, or about the standard of a service or facility provided to students of the College. The procedures are intended to ensure that all complaints are treated fairly and consistently and, wherever possible, to resolve the matter to the complainant's satisfaction.

#### Definition

A complaint is an expression of concern or dissatisfaction with any aspects of the College's provision that requires a response. Complaints concerning assessment and accreditation may sometimes be dealt with through the appeals procedures and those set up by awarding/validating organisations. For details of these please see 'how to appeal' in your student handbook.

The College complaints procedure has two stages:

- informal stage – resolving a concern through informal discussion
- formal stage – resolving a concern through the formal complaints procedure, of which there are three possible stages

#### Informal Stage

Most concerns are straightforward and can be resolved quickly with staff directly involved without the need to complete and submit a complaint form. Therefore, in the first instance, having considered the responsibilities of both students and the College as detailed within the Student Charter, any concerns/issues should be discussed, informally, with the person concerned or another member of staff. For example, if your complaint concerns teaching/tutorial matters you may wish to talk to your tutor or other members of teaching staff. If your complaint is about a service, then you should talk to an appropriate member of staff from that service. You could also consider raising your concern via the student forums. If you are not sure who to speak to, or you do not feel able to approach the person most directly involved, you can seek advice regarding this from your Tutor Mentor or Learner Success Manager or from the Students' Union which acts independently of the College. You can contact the Students' Union on 0114 2602188 or email to [studentsunion@sheffcol.ac.uk](mailto:studentsunion@sheffcol.ac.uk) or call into one of the reception areas to make an appointment. At this point managers may wish to speak to staff involved and also obtain further guidance from Human Resources.

If a satisfactory resolution is not found informally, students are entitled to proceed to the College's formal complaints procedure.

## Formal Stage

### Stage 1

You should complete a Registration of Complaint form, copies of which can be obtained from College reception areas or downloaded from the College website via <http://www.sheffcol.ac.uk/About/Public-Documents/Complaints>. You can ask a member of staff for help to complete the form or ask a friend, parent, carer or a representative of the Students' Union to submit a complaint on your behalf but we would require written agreement from you.

In addition to personal details and other information on the form, you will need to provide:

- details of the complaint
- an explanation of the steps you have already taken to try to resolve the complaint informally and why the responses you have received are not satisfactory
- where applicable, the outcome you would like from your complaint
- any supporting evidence (ie copies of emails, notes of meetings, references to procedures, handbooks etc).

It is important to keep a copy of the completed form and other documentation submitted for your own records. Completed complaint forms should be submitted to any campus reception area or by email to [collegecomplaints@sheffcol.ac.uk](mailto:collegecomplaints@sheffcol.ac.uk).

Within 5 working days of receipt of your complaint form, you will receive an acknowledgement. Your complaint will be considered to determine that the complaints procedure is appropriate and if so, it will be referred to a senior member of staff who will manage your complaint, ensuring that necessary action is taken and monitoring it through to completion. After a further 10 working day you will receive a letter informing you on the progress of you complaint. We aim to complete the enquiry and reach a conclusion within 30 working days of receipt of your complaint form. If this is not possible you will be informed of the progress being made. Complaints identified as requiring particularly speedy resolution will receive special attention.

You may be invited to attend a meeting to consider your complaint. You may bring a friend or representative to support and/or for assistance but they cannot be a professional employed to act on your behalf.

Matters raised in a formal complaint will remain confidential to those directly involved in the investigation (which includes any members of staff concerned). All staff and students who become aware of any of the issues involved in a formal complaint are required to keep this information confidential (except as is necessary to progress, investigate or respond to the complaint). Failure to do so may result in formal disciplinary action being taken. However, there may be occasions when it is not possible to maintain confidentiality, for example if another person is at risk. In such cases the situation will be explained to the complainant and/or the representative. If the student is below 18 years of age the College may be obliged to inform the parent/carers unless the College has received written notification from the student that they do not wish for the parent/carers to be notified.

If your complaint is upheld you will be informed how and when any resolution or redress will be implemented. If the complaint is not upheld you can expect to receive clear reasons why this decision has been reached and advice on further action available to you including a review of the process of the complaint by the awarding body where appropriate (see Stage 2 below).

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, you can write to the Chief Executive, within 10 working days of receipt of the letter informing you of the outcome to apply for a review of the process by the awarding/validating organisation. You should state the reason(s) why you are dissatisfied. Correspondence should be sent to the Chief Executive, c/o PA to the Chief Executive, Sheffield College, Granville Road, Sheffield S2 2RL.

Within 10 working days of receipt of your letter you will be informed of the action to be taken to review your complaint and any action you may need to take directly with the awarding/validating organisation.

**Feedback**

In accordance with the Student Charter, at the end of the two formal stages, you will be invited to complete a short evaluation of the process.

**Monitoring and Review**

The complaints procedure is one of the ways in which the College can monitor its performance and ensure that the quality of its provision is enhanced and the student experience improved. This will be achieved through annual reporting to the Executive Directors and the Governing Body who will monitor the handling of complaints and subsequent improvements through its annual report.

The College will review the complaints procedure every two years and students will be able to contribute to this review either through their local campus or the Student Unions' Executive Committee.

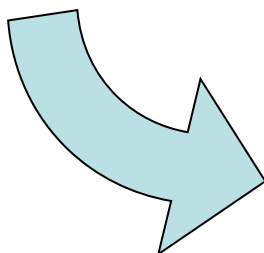
Stage 3

Following the action taken at Stage 2 (and not before), if you still feel that the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction, having exhausted the College's and/or any awarding/validating body's procedures you may wish to refer your complaint further. Students on further education courses should contact the Skills Funding Agency. Correspondence should be addressed to The Complaints Team, Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT or by email to [complaintsteam@sfa.bis.gov.uk](mailto:complaintsteam@sfa.bis.gov.uk). Further information can be found in the Skills Funding Agency's 'Procedure for dealing with complaints about providers of education and training' document which is also available on the College website.

Students studying on higher education courses may be able to apply for a review of their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) providing that the complaint taken to them is eligible under their rules. Rules and timescales for contacting the OIA can be found on their website - <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.

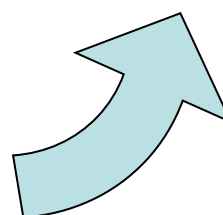
**Formal Stage**

**Stage 1**



**Stage 2**

**Stage 3**



The following information provides a summary of the Complaints Procedure and should be read in conjunction with the guidance provided.

## INFORMAL STAGE

Matters should normally be raised promptly and directly with a member of staff. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found informally, students are entitled to proceed to the College's formal complaints procedure



## HOW TO MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT

Formal complaint, in writing on a Registration of Complaint form, submitted to any campus reception or by email to [collegecomplaints@sheffcol.ac.uk](mailto:collegecomplaints@sheffcol.ac.uk). Acknowledgement to be sent within 5 working days



Further letters will be sent, normally within 10 working days to indicate the progress of the complaint, and within 30 days to confirm of the outcome of the investigation. At the end of Stage 1, the complainant will be invited to evaluate the process



If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome they can write to the Chief Executive stating their reasons within 10 days of receipt of outcome at Stage 1 for review by the awarding/validating body



Initial response normally within 10 working days indicating the action to be taken to investigate the complaint and any action required by the complainant. At the end of Stage 2, the complainant will be invited to evaluate the process



If not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction further education students can write to: The Complaints Team, Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT; higher education students can apply for a review of their complaint to The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>